that rioting in the city was rampant in 1831 with a number of "unruly negroes put to death." He recounted that in 1831, the heads of men killed because of supposed ties to slave insurrection conspiracies were placed on pikes in conspicuous areas as a warning to others "bent upon stirring up racial tensions."[87]

Wilmington's Riot and Racial Clashes in the South

Racial tensions and explosions of violence directed against African Americans were not uncommon in the South at the turn of the twentieth century. The fear and actuality of slave uprisings prior to the Civil War and the growth of spontaneous lynch mobs of the late 19th century created a cult of violence. Although clashes between more than one black and more than one white have been called race riots, historian Paul Gilje has sought to clarify the term and the overall phenomenon of rioting in the United States. Gilje defined a "riot" as "any group of twelve or more people attempting to assert their will immediately through the use of force outside the normal bounds of law." [88] Gilje further noted that the first race riots were white invasions of African American communities but, after World War II, African Americans used the riot as a tool to vent their frustration with failures in social, political and economic progress. However, Gilje and other historians have noted that white rioters killed blacks while destroying black property and that such riots were followed by a suppression of the black voice in politics and the media whereas black rioters usually only destroyed white property and their actions rarely led to bloodshed. [89] In order to distinguish between the two types of upheavals, historian H. Leon Prather suggested alternative and more appropriate labels for the racial clashes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century: massacre, pogrom, or race war.[90]

Wilmington's riot followed a model of white invasion into black neighborhoods, loss of black property, and the deaths of black citizens plus the creation of a virtually silent African American population. Wilmington's riot was the first of its kind in the industrial age although there were scores of lynchings taking place throughout the South each year. Prior to 1898, three noteworthy race riots took place in the South. Of these, two were in 1866 in response to Reconstruction woes in Memphis, Tennessee and New Orleans and the third, in Danville, Virginia in 1883, occurred much as Wilmington's riot – during election season and in response to attempts by blacks to exercise their full rights as citizens in public spaces. [91]

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[87] Another interesting oral tradition is that there were truly guns in the basement of St. Stephen's AMEC Church. The tradition holds that the weapons were stored in a concealed entrance to an underground tunnel or crawlspace created beneath the church by members who constructed the building. Hayden, "Introduction to the Wilmington Rebellion," 35-36.

[88] Paul Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 4.

[89] Charles Crowe, "Racial Massacre in Atlanta September 22, 1906," *Journal of Negro History* 54 (April 1969): 150; Gilje, *Rioting in America*, pg. 155.

[90] In discussion of November 10, 1898 in Wilmington, Prather has also added the term, coup d'etat to the lexicon. In his groundbreaking study of the riot, *We Have Taken a City,* Prather argued that the violence and resignations of the Board of Aldermen under duress constituted nothing less than an armed takeover of the city's government. H. Leon Prather, "Race Riots," in *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, ed. by Charles Reagan Wilson and William Ferris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1989): pg. 1496.

[91] Gilge, *Rioting in America*, 96-7; James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., *An Absolute Massacre: The New Orleans Race Riot of July 30, 1866* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001); Jane Dailey, "Deference and Violence in the Postbellum Urban South: Manners and Massacres in Danville,